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dicated a small change of our course, which nearly accounted for the half point of deviation.

With our modern big ships, and the expertness of those who control them, every help to accurate navigation on the broad ocean will be welcomed, and sailors and landsmen should be grateful for the benefit such tables may be to the navigator.

R. H. TUCKER.

November 1, 1915.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF VARIABLE STARS.[1]

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Vassar College, a collection of notable volumes is being published by Vassar Alumnæ. Miss FURNESS's *Introduction to the Study of Variable Stars* is one of these, and if it is typical, Vassar College has reason to be proud of the series.

The work is "the outcome of several years of teaching the subject," and its purpose and scope are well suggested by its title. It is not a comprehensive treatise such as the one now being published by Father HAGEN *(Die Veränderliche Sterne),* but is a general introductory book (the only one published in the English language) which is suited to the needs of teachers wishing to present the subject of variable star study to a class in a practical way, and to amateurs who, without special training in astronomy, wish to make their observations of the stars of scientific value. It should also appeal to the general reader, for it contains a great amount of interesting information put into language that is clear as well as precise.

The earlier chapters of the book deal not only with the subject of stellar variation, but with a variety of other topics,—the principles of spectrum analysis, star charts and catalogs, both visual and photographic, the early history of stellar magnitude, the principles of polarized light, upon which many photometers are based, etc. The treatment of these questions is avowedly not comprehensive, but enuf is said to give the student the knowledge needed to understand the application to the subject of variable stars. Furthermore, reference is always made to books accessible in any good library wherein these matters may be studied in more detail.

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[1] By CAROLINE E. FURNESS, Ph.D., Director of the Vassar College Observatory. xv +, 327 pp., 8 vo., C2, $1.75. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, 1915.

The chapters dealing directly with the variable stars of different classes, the methods of their observation, the foundation of light scale, the mean light curve, the calculation of the elements, and the prediction of the maxima and minima from the elements show that Miss Furness is a trained observer as well as a practical and successful teacher. The treatment is full and clear and the illustrative examples are given in sufficient detail. The instructions given for the benefit of the observer naturally relate almost entirely to visual observations, made without the use of photometers, for the observer who has a Zöllner or wedge photometer, and, still more, the one equipped to carry on photographic observations may be assumed to have had special preliminary training.

The book is remarkably free from errors of any kind, practically no typographical errors and only one statement that may be misleading being found in a rather careful reading. This statement is the one on page 49 that "The southern survey of the heavens has been extended to declination —42° under the direction of Professor Perrine at the Cordoba Observatory . . ." Of course, Dr. Perrine, the present director, is energetically carrying on this work, but the Cordoba D. M. was planned by Dr. Gould, and carried to —52° by the late Dr. Thome, under whose direction also the maps to —42° were issued in 1893. A new edition of these maps has recently been issued by Dr. Perrine and this probably accounts for the slip.

R. G. Aitken.

November 15, 1915.